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being auctioned at the respective auction site, and
 5 wherein the intermediary web site includes an agent
 that is configured to communicate with and retrieve
 auction item data from each auction site data engine,
 and wherein the step of obtaining auction item data at
 10 each of the auction sites that has changed since a
 previous time for auctions currently being conducted at
 each respective auction site comprises:

establishing a TCP/IP connection between the
 agent and each respective data engine; and

15 sending an HTTP request from the agent to
 each respective data engine via the TCP/IP connection
 to obtain auction item data that has changed since a
 previous time.

4. The method according to Claim 3 wherein
 the data engine at each auction site comprises a data
 file configured to store cyclic redundancy checking
 (CRC) values for static and dynamic information about
 5 each auction item being auctioned at the respective
 auction site, wherein static information comprises an
 identification of an auction item, wherein dynamic
 information comprises at least one of bid information
 and price information associated with an auction item,
 10 and wherein the step of obtaining auction item data
 that has changed since a previous time comprises the
 following steps performed by each respective data
 engine:

15 determining whether the data file contains a
 CRC value for each item currently being auctioned;

storing CRC values in the data file for each
 item currently being auctioned that does not have a CRC

value in the data file; and

20 sending static and dynamic information to the
intermediary web site for each item currently being
auctioned that does not have a CRC value in the data
file.

5 5. The method according to Claim 4 wherein
the step of obtaining auction item data that has
changed since a previous time further comprises the
following steps performed by each respective data
engine:

generating new CRC values for each item
currently being auctioned;

10 comparing the new CRC values with CRC values
stored within the data file for each respective auction
item;

storing the new CRC values for each item
currently being auctioned in the respective data file
if the new CRC values differ from the stored CRC
values; and

15 sending to the intermediary web site current
information for each item currently being auctioned.

5 6. A method of updating information
maintained at an intermediary web site on a computer
network about items being auctioned at a plurality of
remotely located auction sites on the computer network,
wherein the information is displayable to users
accessing the intermediary web site via the computer
network, wherein each auction site includes a data
engine that is configured to obtain data about each
item currently being auctioned at the respective

10 auction site, wherein each data engine comprises a data
file configured to store cyclic redundancy checking
(CRC) values for static and dynamic information about
each auction item being auctioned at the respective
15 auction site, wherein static information comprises an
identification of an auction item, wherein dynamic
information comprises at least one of bid information
and price information associated with an auction item,
and wherein the intermediary web site includes an agent
that is configured to communicate with and retrieve
20 auction item data from each auction site data engine,
the method comprising the following steps:

 sending a request from the agent to a
plurality of respective data engines to obtain auction
item data that has changed since a previous time for
25 auctions currently being conducted at the respective
auction sites;

 obtaining auction item data that has changed
since a previous time for auctions currently being
conducted at the respective auction sites, comprising
30 the following steps performed by each respective data
engine:

 determining whether a data file contains
a CRC value for each item currently being
auctioned;

35 storing CRC values in the data file for
each item currently being auctioned that does
not have a CRC value in the data file; and

 sending static and dynamic information
to the intermediary web site for each item
40 currently being auctioned that does not have
a CRC value in the data file; and

updating the information maintained at the intermediary web site with the static and dynamic information received from each respective data engine.

7. The method according to Claim 6 wherein the step of updating the information maintained at the intermediary web site comprises the following steps:

extracting keywords from the received static and dynamic information; and

storing the extracted keywords, wherein each stored keyword is associated with an item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites, and wherein the stored keywords are searchable by users accessing the intermediary web site.

8. The method according to Claim 6 wherein the step of sending a request from the agent to each of a plurality of respective data engines is performed at predetermined time intervals.

9. The method according to Claim 6 wherein the step of obtaining auction item data that has changed since a previous time further comprises the following steps performed by each respective data engine:

generating new CRC values for each item currently being auctioned;

comparing the new CRC values with CRC values stored within a data file for each respective auction item;

storing the new CRC values for each item

currently being auctioned in the respective data file if the new CRC values differ from the stored CRC values; and

15 sending to the intermediary web site current information for each item currently being auctioned.

10. A method of providing information, via a Web site of an intermediary, about items being auctioned at a plurality of remotely located auction sites on a computer network, wherein the Web site is configured to communicate with each of the plurality of remotely located auction sites via the computer network, and wherein the Web site is configured to communicate with users accessing the Web site via respective Web clients, the method comprising the following steps:

5 receiving a user request at the Web site for information about items currently being auctioned at one or more of the auction sites, wherein the user request comprises at least one of a keyword and an auction item parameter; and

15 responsive to receiving the user request, searching keywords maintained by the Web site for matches with the user request keyword, wherein each keyword maintained by the Web site is associated with at least one item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites; and

20 responsive to locating a keyword that matches a user request keyword, displaying information about an item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites that is

associated with the located keyword, wherein the displayed information comprises an identification of the auction item, and wherein a portion of the displayed information is selectably linked to the respective auction site such that, upon user activation, a user Web client is redirected to the respective auction site.

11. The method according to Claim 10, wherein the displayed information further comprises at least one of auction time and price information associated with the auction item.

12. The method according to Claim 10, further comprising the step of sending the user updated information about the auction item at one or more future times.

13. The method according to Claim 10, further comprising:

performing a search of keywords maintained by the Web site subsequent to the displaying step; and sending the user results from the performed search.

14. A method of providing information, via a Web site of an intermediary, about items being auctioned at a plurality of remotely located auction sites on a computer network, wherein the Web site is configured to communicate with each of the plurality of remotely located auction sites via the computer network, and wherein the Web site is configured to

communicate with users accessing the Web site via
 respective Web clients, the method comprising the
 following steps:

receiving a user request at the Web site for
 information about items currently being auctioned at
 one or more of the auction sites, wherein the user
 request comprises a keyword;

responsive to receiving the user request,
 searching keywords maintained by the Web site for
 matches with the user request keyword, wherein each
 keyword maintained by the Web site is associated with
 an item currently being auctioned at a respective one
 of the plurality of remotely located auction sites;

responsive to locating a keyword that matches
 the user request keyword, displaying information about
 an item currently being auctioned at a respective one
 of the plurality of remotely located auction sites that
 is associated with the located keyword, wherein the
 displayed information comprises at least one of an
 identification of the auction item, auction time, and
 price information associated with the auction item, and
 wherein a portion of the displayed information is
 selectably linked to the respective auction site such
 that, upon user activation, the user Web client is
 redirected to the respective auction site; and

sending the user updated information about
 the auction item at one or more future times.

15. The method according to Claim 12,
 wherein the step of sending the user updated
 information about the auction item at one or more
 future times comprises sending the user an e-mail

5 message containing the updated information.

16. A method of participating in an auction conducted at one or more remotely located auction sites on a computer network, the method comprising the following steps:

5 sending a user request for information about items currently being auctioned at one or more of the remotely located auction sites to a Web site of an intermediary on the computer network, wherein the user request comprises at least one keyword;

10 responsive to receiving the user request, searching keywords maintained by the Web site for matches with the at least one user request keyword, wherein each keyword maintained by the Web site is associated with an item currently being auctioned at a
15 respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites;

responsive to locating a keyword that matches the user request keyword, displaying information about an item currently being auctioned at a respective one
20 of the plurality of remotely located auction sites that is associated with the located keyword, wherein the displayed information comprises at least one of an identification of the auction item, auction time, and price information associated with the auction item;

25 sending a user request to place a bid on the auction item to the intermediary Web site; and

responsive to receiving the user request to place the bid, placing a bid for the user on the auction item at the respective auction site where the
30 auction item is being auctioned.

17. The method according to Claim 16, further comprising the step of sending the user updated information about the auction item at one or more future times.

18. The method according to Claim 16, further comprising:

performing a search of keywords maintained by the Web site subsequent to the displaying step; and sending the user results from the performed search.

19. A method of listing an item for sale in an auction conducted at one of a plurality of remotely located auction sites on a computer network, the method comprising the following steps performed by a Web site of an intermediary:

displaying a list of auctions conducted at one or more of the remotely located auction sites; and sending a request to a selected one of the auction sites to list an item for sale at an auction conducted at the selected auction site in response to receiving a user request.

20. The method according to Claim 19, wherein the user request comprises at least one of an identification of the item, a quantity of the item, price information, and auction time information.

21. The method according to Claim 20, further comprising the step of sending the user updated

information about auction status of the item at one or more future times.

22. The method according to Claim 21, wherein the step of sending the user updated information about auction status of the item at one or more future times comprises sending the user an e-mail message containing the updated information.

23. An on-line auction system, comprising:
a computer network;
at least one remotely located auction site in communication with the computer network, wherein each auction site comprises:

a data engine that is configured to obtain data about each item currently being auctioned at the respective auction site, wherein each data engine comprises a data file configured to store cyclic redundancy checking (CRC) values for static and dynamic information about each auction item being auctioned at the respective auction site, wherein static information comprises an identification of an auction item, wherein dynamic information comprises at least one of bid information and price information associated with an auction item; and

means for obtaining auction item data that has changed since a previous time for auctions currently being conducted at the respective auction sites;
a Web site of an intermediary in

communication with the computer network, wherein the
25 Web site is configured to display selected information
about auction items at each of the remotely located
auction sites, comprising:

an agent that is configured to
communicate with and retrieve auction item
30 data from each auction site data engine; and

means for sending a request from the
agent to each of a plurality of respective
data engines to obtain auction item data that
has changed since a previous time for
35 auctions currently being conducted at the
respective auction sites; and

means for updating the information
maintained at the intermediary web site with
the information received from each respective
40 data engine.

24. The on-line auction system according to
Claim 23, wherein the means for obtaining auction item
data that has changed since a previous time comprises:

means for determining whether the data file
5 contains a CRC value for each item currently being
auctioned;

means for storing CRC values in the data file
for each item currently being auctioned that does not
have a CRC value in the data file; and

10 means for sending static and dynamic
information to the intermediary web site for each item
currently being auctioned that does not have a CRC
value in the data file.

25. The on-line auction system according to Claim 23, wherein the means for updating the information maintained at the intermediary web site comprises:

5 means for extracting keywords from the received information; and

means for storing the extracted keywords, wherein each stored keyword is associated with an item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites, and wherein the stored keywords are searchable by users accessing the intermediary web site.

26. The on-line auction system according to Claim 23 wherein the means for sending a request from the agent to each of a plurality of respective data engines comprises means for sending requests at
5 predetermined time intervals.

27. The on-line auction system according to Claim 23 wherein the means for obtaining auction item data that has changed since a previous time comprises:

5 means for generating new CRC values for each item currently being auctioned;

means for comparing new CRC values with CRC values stored within the data file for each respective auction item;

10 means for storing the CRC values for each item currently being auctioned in the respective data file if the new CRC values differ from the stored CRC values; and

means for sending to the intermediary web

15 site current information for each item currently being
auctioned.

28. A data processing system for providing
information about items being auctioned at a plurality
of remotely located auction sites on a computer
network, wherein the data processing system is
5 configured to communicate with each of the plurality of
remotely located auction sites via the computer
network, and wherein the data processing system is
configured to communicate with users accessing the data
processing system via respective Web clients,
10 comprising:

means for receiving a user request for
information about items currently being auctioned at
one or more of the auction sites, wherein the user
request comprises a keyword;

15 means, responsive to receiving a user
request, for searching keywords maintained by the data
processing system for matches with the user request
keyword, wherein each keyword maintained by the data
processing system is associated with an item currently
20 being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of
remotely located auction sites; and

means, responsive to locating a keyword that
matches the user request keyword, for displaying
information about an item currently being auctioned at
25 a respective one of the plurality of remotely located
auction sites that is associated with the located
keyword, wherein the displayed information comprises an
identification of the auction item, and wherein a
portion of the displayed information is selectably

30 linked to the respective auction site such that, upon user activation, a user Web client is redirected to the respective auction site.

29. The data processing system according to Claim 28, wherein the displayed information further comprises at least one of auction time and price information associated with the auction item.

30. The data processing system according to Claim 28, further comprising means for sending the user updated information about the auction item at one or more future times.

31. The data processing system according to Claim 28, further comprising:

means for subsequently performing searches of keywords maintained by the Web site; and

5 means for sending the user results from the subsequently performed searches.

32. A data processing system for providing information about items being auctioned at a plurality of remotely located auction sites on a computer network, wherein the data processing system is
5 configured to communicate with each of the plurality of remotely located auction sites via the computer network, and wherein the data processing system is configured to communicate with users accessing the data processing system via respective Web clients,
10 comprising:

means for receiving a user request at the

data processing system for information about items currently being auctioned at one or more of the auction sites, wherein the user request comprises a keyword;

15 means, responsive to receiving the user request, for searching keywords maintained by the data processing system for matches with the user request keyword, wherein each keyword maintained by the data processing system is associated with an item currently
20 being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites;

means, responsive to locating a keyword maintained by the data processing system that matches the user request keyword, for displaying information
25 about an item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites that is associated with the located keyword, wherein the displayed information comprises at least one of an identification of the auction item, auction time, and
30 price information associated with the auction item, and wherein a portion of the displayed information is selectably linked to the respective auction site such that, upon user activation, a user Web client is redirected to the respective auction site; and

35 means for sending the user updated information about the auction item at one or more future times.

33. The data processing system according to Claim 32, wherein the means for sending the user updated information about the auction item at one or more future times comprises means for sending the user
5 an e-mail message containing the updated information.

34. A data processing system for participating in an auction conducted at one or more remotely located auction sites on a computer network, comprising:

5 means for receiving a user request for information about items currently being auctioned at one or more of the remotely located auction sites, wherein the user request comprises at least one keyword;

10 means for searching keywords maintained by the data processing system for matches with the at least one user request keyword, wherein each keyword maintained by the data processing system is associated with an item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites;

15 means, responsive to locating a keyword that matches the user request keyword, for displaying information about an item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites that is associated with the located keyword, wherein the displayed information comprises at least one of an identification of the auction item, auction time, and price information associated with the auction item;

20 means for receiving a user request to place a bid on the auction item; and

means for placing the bid on behalf of the user on the auction item at a respective auction site where the auction item is being auctioned.

35. The data processing system according to

Claim 34, further comprising means for sending the user updated information about the auction item at one or more future times.

36. The data processing system according to Claim 34, further comprising:

means for subsequently performing searches of keywords maintained by the Web site; and

5 means for sending the user results from the subsequently performed searches.

37. A data processing system for listing an item for sale in an auction conducted at one of a plurality of remotely located auction sites on a computer network, comprising:

5 means for displaying a list of auctions conducted at one or more of the remotely located auction sites;

means for receiving a user request to list an item for sale in a selected one of the displayed list
10 of auctions; and

means for listing the item for sale in the selected auction at a respective auction site.

38. The data processing system according to Claim 37, wherein the user request comprises at least one of an identification of the item, a quantity of the item, price information, and auction time information.

39. The data processing system according to Claim 37, further comprising means for sending the user updated information about auction status of the item at

one or more future times.

40. The data processing system according to Claim 39, wherein the means for sending the user updated information about auction status of the item at one or more future times comprises means for sending the user an e-mail message containing the updated information.

41. A computer program product that provides information about items being auctioned at a plurality of remotely located auction sites on a computer network, wherein the computer program product is configured to communicate with each of the plurality of remotely located auction sites via the computer network, wherein the computer program product is configured to communicate with users accessing the data processing system via respective Web clients, and wherein the computer program product comprises a computer usable storage medium having computer readable program code embodied in the medium, the computer readable program code comprising:

computer readable program code that receives a user request for information about items currently being auctioned at one or more of the auction sites, wherein the user request comprises a keyword;

computer readable program code that, in response to receiving a user request, searches stored keywords for matches with the user request keyword, wherein each stored keyword is associated with an item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites; and

computer readable program code that, in
 25 response to locating a keyword that matches the user
 request keyword, displays information about an item
 currently being auctioned at a respective one of the
 plurality of remotely located auction sites that is
 associated with the located keyword, wherein the
 30 displayed information comprises an identification of
 the auction item, and wherein a portion of the
 displayed information is selectably linked to the
 respective auction site such that, upon user
 activation, a user Web client is redirected to the
 35 respective auction site.

42. The computer program product according
 to Claim 41, wherein the displayed information further
 comprises at least one of auction time and price
 information associated with the auction item.

43. The computer program product according
 to Claim 41, further comprising computer readable
 program code that sends the user updated information
 about the auction item at one or more future times.

44. The computer program product according
 to Claim 41, further comprising:

computer readable program code that
 subsequently performs searches of keywords maintained
 5 by the Web site; and

computer readable program code that sends the
 user results from the subsequently performed searches.

45. A computer program product that provides

information about items being auctioned at a plurality
of remotely located auction sites on a computer
network, wherein the computer program product is
5 configured to communicate with each of the plurality of
remotely located auction sites via the computer
network, wherein the computer program product is
configured to communicate with users accessing the data
processing system via respective Web clients, and
10 wherein the computer program product comprises a
computer usable storage medium having computer readable
program code embodied in the medium, the computer
readable program code comprising:

computer readable program code that receives
15 a user request at the data processing system for
information about items currently being auctioned at
one or more of the auction sites, wherein the user
request comprises a keyword;

computer readable program code that, in
20 response to receiving the user request, searches stored
keywords for matches with the user request keyword,
wherein each stored keyword is associated with an item
currently being auctioned at a respective one of the
plurality of remotely located auction sites;

computer readable program code that, in
25 response to locating a keyword that matches the user
request keyword, displays information about an item
currently being auctioned at a respective one of the
plurality of remotely located auction sites that is
30 associated with the located keyword, wherein the
displayed information comprises at least one of an
identification of the auction item, auction time, and
price information associated with the auction item, and

wherein a portion of the displayed information is
35 selectably linked to the respective auction site such
that, upon user activation, a user Web client is
redirected to the respective auction site; and

computer readable program code that sends the
user updated information about the auction item at one
40 or more future times.

46. The computer program product according
to Claim 45, further comprising:

computer readable program code that
subsequently performs searches of keywords maintained
5 by the Web site; and

computer readable program code that sends the
user results from the subsequently performed searches.

47. A computer program product that
facilitates user participation in auctions conducted at
remote, on-line auction sites on a computer network,
wherein the computer program product comprises a
5 computer usable storage medium having computer readable
program code embodied in the medium, the computer
readable program code comprising:

computer readable program code that receives
a user request for information about items currently
10 being auctioned at one or more of the remote auction
sites, wherein the user request comprises at least one
keyword;

computer readable program code that searches
stored keywords for matches with the at least one user
15 request keyword, wherein each stored keyword is
associated with an item currently being auctioned at a

respective one of the remote auction sites;

computer readable program code that, in response to locating a keyword that matches the user request keyword, displays information about an item currently being auctioned at a respective one of the plurality of remotely located auction sites that is associated with the located keyword, wherein the displayed information comprises at least one of an identification of the auction item, auction time, and price information associated with the auction item;

computer readable program code that receives a user request to place a bid on the auction item; and

computer readable program code that places the bid on behalf of the user on the auction item at a respective auction site where the auction item is being auctioned.

48. The computer program product according to Claim 47, further comprising computer readable program code that sends the user updated information about the auction item at one or more future times.

49. The computer program product according to Claim 47, further comprising:

computer readable program code that subsequently performs searches of keywords maintained by the Web site; and

computer readable program code that sends the user results from the subsequently performed searches.

50. A computer program product that lists an item for sale in an auction conducted at one of a

plurality of remotely located auction sites on a
computer network, wherein the computer program product
comprises a computer usable storage medium having
computer readable program code embodied in the medium,
the computer readable program code comprising:

computer readable program code that displays
a list of auctions conducted at one or more of the
remotely located auction sites;

computer readable program code that receives
a user request to list an item for sale in a selected
one of the displayed list of auctions; and

computer readable program code that lists the
item for sale in the selected auction at a respective
auction site.

51. The computer program product according
to Claim 50, wherein the user request comprises at
least one of an identification of the item, a quantity
of the item, price information, and auction time
information.

52. The computer program product according
to Claim 50, further comprising computer readable
program code that sends the user updated information
about auction status of the item at one or more future
times.

53. The computer program product according
to Claim 50, wherein the computer readable program code
that sends the user updated information about auction
status of the item at one or more future times
comprises computer readable program code that sends the

user an e-mail message containing the updated
information.

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